

Story 1253 (1988 Tape 1)

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Nasreddin Hoca and the Distant Light

On a cold winter day, a group of people in his village decided to play a trick on Nasreddin Hoca. This idea came to them from a discussion they were having in the village coffee house. One villager said, "No matter how cold it may be our Hoca could stay outdoors all night without a bit of heat. Some villagers agreed with this statement, but as many others disagreed with it.

After they had been arguing about this for a while, Nasreddin Hoca entered the coffeehouse and overheard the conversation. He finally interrupted them by saying, "I shall bet you that I can indeed remain outside all night without any heat. What do you want to bet on this?"

When the villagers had reached an agreement on this bet, one of them said, "Hoca, if you win this bet, we shall buy anything you might wish as a gift from us, but if you lose, then you will give a feast for all of us.

"All right!" answered the Hoca.

That same night the Hoca remained outside without any equipment or means of providing any heat for himself. The following morning the villagers asked the Hoca, "What happened

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during the night?"

The Hoca said, "It was not only cold last night, but it was also very dark outside. All I could see was a tiny light in the distance, and I spent the whole night watching that light."

When the villagers heard that, one of them said, "Well, then, Hoca, you have lost the bet! You warmed yourself with the heat from that light!"

Although the Hoca argued that he received no heat at all from that distant point of light, he was not able to persuade the villagers of this. He finally said, "Very well, I shall give you a feast anyway," and he invited them to come to his home on a certain evening shortly after that.

Three days later the villagers went to the Hoca's house at the time agreed upon. As they waited for dinner, they all sat in the main room of the house and talked together to pass the time. After several hours had passed, however, without any food having been served, one of the villagers asked, "Hoca, when shall we eat? Where is the food that you promised us?"

The Hoca answered, "The food is on the fire cooking."

But by this time the villagers had become suspicious, and one of them asked, "Could we see the food, Hoca?"

"Of course!" he said, and he led them out into the garden.

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What they saw was a cauldron suspended from a high branch of a tree, and beneath the tree was a burning candle.

Astounded by what they saw, several of the guests asked, "How can a candle on the ground boil whatever is in the cauldron up there?"

The Hoca responded promptly, "How could a tiny light several kilometers away possibly have kept me warm on the night I spent outdoors?"